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Letter dated 26 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Bulgaria in December 2003 (see annex). This assessment has been prepared on my own authority and has been consulted with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would circulate it as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Stefan **Tafrov**
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Annex to the letter dated 26 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Bulgaria (December 2003)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Bulgaria during the month of December 2003 the Security Council had a full and intensive programme of work and considered a wide range of issues on its agenda.

In total the Council met on 13 occasions in open meetings, and held 2 private meetings and 11 consultations of the whole. During the month of December the Security Council adopted three resolutions (on the situation in Somalia, the situation in Liberia and the situation in the Middle East) and six presidential statements, and the President was authorized on eight occasions to make statements to the press on behalf of Council members.

The Council held an open meeting presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Solomon Passy, during which the Council considered the situation in Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro.

The Council also decided to extend for a period of one year the mandates of its Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations and the informal Working Group on general issues relating to sanctions.

Africa

Burundi

On 4 December the Council held an open meeting to hear a briefing on the situation in Burundi by Jacob Zuma, Deputy President of South Africa and Facilitator of the Burundi peace process. The Council had before it a letter dated 19 November 2003 from the representative of Burundi to the United Nations (S/2003/1105) transmitting the Global Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government of Burundi and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), signed at Dar es Salaam on 16 November 2003.

At the same meeting the Council was addressed by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Gert Rosenthal (Guatemala), who had just returned from a mission to Burundi.

In his presentation Mr. Zuma noted the progress made so far in the peace process in Burundi and pointed out that the country had successfully completed the first two thirds of the transition period at the end of which a democratically elected government should be in a position to replace transitional institutions. However he cautioned that, while the implementation of all ceasefire agreements had been swift, the PALIPEHUTU-FNL rebel group of Agathon Rwasa remained outside the peace process.

Following the briefing, the Council members applauded South Africa's outstanding role in the peace process and commended the leading role played by the African Union mission, which had helped in ensuring continuity to the efforts of those Burundians committed to a peaceful settlement of the decade-long conflict. The recent visit of the Economic and Social Council mission to Burundi was also recognized as a demonstration of that commitment.

At the same time some Council members expressed concern that PALIPEHUTU-FNL remained outside the peace process and that the Nairobi negotiations between the group and the Transitional Government had failed to produce hopeful results. The rebel group was urged to end hostilities immediately and to enter into talks with the Transitional Government without further delay.

On 19 December the Council met in informal consultations to consider the situation in Burundi. The Council had before it the report of the Secretary-General (S/2003/1146). In a presidential statement adopted after the consultations the Council members welcomed the signing of the protocols of 8 October and 2 November 2003 in Pretoria and the conclusion of the Global Ceasefire Agreement on 16 November 2003. They expressed satisfaction over the formation of the new Transitional Government and the participation of CNDD-FDD in its institutions.

The Security Council once more urged PALIPEHUTU-FNL to join the Arusha process without further delay.

The Council approved the recommendation, contained in the report of the Secretary-General, to renew the mandate of the United Nations Office in Burundi.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 4 December the Security Council, after consultations among its members, met in an open meeting, at which it adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council expressed its grave concern at attempts by armed elements in Côte d'Ivoire to cross the ceasefire line, as observed by the forces of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and France. The Council strongly underscored to all the Ivorian parties their primary responsibility for observing the ceasefire, and called on all the parties to refrain from any action that could jeopardize observance of the ceasefire and implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

The Council reiterated its full support for the ECOWAS and French forces and commended them for their action to prevent such attempts, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The Council also emphasized the importance of having the Forces nouvelles participate fully in the Government of National Reconciliation. It also reaffirmed the urgency of carrying out operations to regroup the opposing forces so that disarmament and demobilization could begin, including measures of reintegration into the regular army or into civilian life.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 11 December the Security Council met in informal consultations to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed Council members on the issue.

Following the consultations the President made a statement to the press, in which the members of the Security Council expressed appreciation for the active involvement of the African Union, in particular of South Africa and other actors in the region, in moving forward the peace process. They welcomed the improvement in bilateral relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda, and encouraged them to work on concrete confidence-building measures.

The members of the Council noted the progress made by the Government of National Unity and Transition and urged it to accelerate the implementation of the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement, particularly in the areas of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and reform of the armed and police forces. The need to adopt the necessary legislation establishing the institutions in support of democracy, the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and adopting revised legislation upholding human rights principles were stressed as important elements in the efforts to advance the peace process.

All the parties to the conflict were urged to take all necessary measures to stop violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and bring to justice the perpetrators.

The Council members called on United Nations Member States and international organizations to assist the Government in its work to re-establish the rule of law throughout the country. They also paid tribute to the work done by MONUC, in particular in Ituri, and fully supported it.

The Council members also stressed the importance of the effective implementation of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1493 (2003) and fully supported the efforts to end the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Guinea-Bissau

In informal consultations held on 19 December the members of the Security Council considered the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau (S/2003/1157) and heard a briefing from David Stephen, Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNOGBIS.

The members of the Council welcomed the ongoing efforts by the Transitional Government of Guinea-Bissau to implement the transition and supported the UNOGBIS contribution in this regard. They agreed on a text for a statement to the press by the President of the Security Council, in which they welcomed the positive steps taken by the authorities in preparation for the forthcoming parliamentary elections (28 March 2003) and encouraged the Transitional Government and all actors in the country to stay the course and to continue working together in search of the right solutions to the urgent problems confronting the country.

Expressing their concern about the critical economic and social situation of the country, the Council members renewed their appeal to the international community to provide urgent assistance to Guinea-Bissau and commended the assistance made so far by some countries and organizations. The constructive role of the Bretton

Woods institutions as well as of the African Development Bank and UNDP in this regard was commended.

The members of the Council also commended the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council and the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau for their role and support.

Liberia

In informal consultations on 4 December the members of the Security Council reviewed the measures on Liberia pursuant to resolution 1478 (2003) bearing in mind recent developments.

The Council was briefed by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia, who presented information on the discussion in the Committee and on the recent report of the Panel of Experts on Liberia.

There was a general agreement among the members of the Council that the measures concerning Liberia should be continued for the time being. The objective would be to continue to support the peace process in Liberia and to further consolidate peace and stability in the subregion.

Bearing in mind the changed circumstances and recent positive developments in Liberia, the Council members agreed that there was a need, inter alia, to redefine the legal basis for the sanctions and to evolve appropriate criteria for their eventual lifting.

At an open meeting held on 22 December, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 1521 (2003) on Liberia, by which, bearing in mind the changed circumstances in Liberia, the Council revised the basis of the sanctions and established a new Security Council Committee to oversee the implementation of the revised sanctions.

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

On 23 December, after informal consultations among the members of the Security Council, the President made a statement to the press in connection with the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations in New York transmitting the text of the announcement by the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on 19 December 2003 that it would abandon voluntarily its programmes for developing weapons of mass destruction.

The Council members took note of the letter from the Libyan Permanent Representative and welcomed the recognition by the Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya of the concerns of the international community about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They welcomed and encouraged the cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya with others, including the United Nations and other relevant international bodies, to ensure verified elimination of all of its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

The Council members echoed the Secretary-General's statement of 20 December 2003 on the action of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and underlined the importance of the full and complete implementation of all disarmament treaties by

all States concerned and the intensifying of their efforts towards the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Somalia

On 3 December the members of the Security Council held informal consultations to discuss the report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1474 (2003) and to hear an oral report by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia on the mission of the Committee to the region.

The Council members underlined the critical role of the effective enforcement and monitoring of the sanctions regime for the Somalia national peace and reconciliation talks and reiterated the active engagement of the Security Council in this process. They emphasized the need for a united approach and stronger support of the international community for enhanced implementation of the arms embargo in Somalia and strongly urged the neighbouring and frontline States to comply fully with their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The members of the Council stressed the risks of the continued flow of weapons and ammunition supplies to and through Somalia for the stability and security in a wider region in Africa, and appealed for sustained regional efforts and cooperation to improve the monitoring and the implementation of the arms embargo on Somalia.

On 16 December, at an open meeting, the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 1519 (2003) on the situation in Somalia, in which it reiterated its serious concern over the continued flow of weapons and ammunition supplies to and through Somalia from sources outside the country; included a range of measures aimed at improving the effectiveness of the arms embargo on Somalia; and requested the Secretary-General to establish a Monitoring Group as soon as possible to focus on the ongoing violations of the arms embargo, including transfers of ammunition, single-use weapons and small arms.

Asia

Bougainville, Papua New Guinea

On 15 December the Security Council convened in an open meeting to consider the peace process in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. The Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Danilo Türk. Noting the expiration of the mandate of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), the Assistant Secretary-General proposed that a successor mission be set up on 1 January 2004 for a period of six months. Continued United Nations presence was needed to monitor the constitutional process and security situation as well as the destruction of contained weapons. Because of its more limited role, the substantive staff of UNPOB could be reduced by 50 per cent.

Following the briefing, the Council members welcomed the commitment of the Government in Bougainville to a political settlement, as well as the fact that the process had now entered the constitutional phase. The decision, in principle, by the parties to destroy the collected weapons was viewed as vital. The members of the Council expressed general agreement for a follow-on observer mission.

The representative of Papua New Guinea in a statement to the Council noted the real and substantial progress reached in the peace process. He paid tribute to the positive role played by UNPOB and pointed out that the Organization's continued support should be seen not so much as an extension but as following through with an agreed assignment.

In a letter dated 23 December 2003 addressed to the Secretary-General the President of the Security Council informed him that the Council members took note of his intention to establish a small United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) for a six-month period to replace UNPOB, and took note of the functions and the staffing structure of UNOMB as indicated in the Secretary-General's letter to the Council dated 19 December 2003.

Iraq

In a statement to the press on 8 December the Council members agreed to condemn in the strongest terms the repeated attacks in Iraq on foreign and Iraqi nationals and international and Coalition personnel, including those perpetrated on 12, 29 and 30 November against Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Korean and Colombian personnel.

In a similar statement made on 29 December the members of the Council condemned also the attacks perpetrated on 27 December against Bulgarian, Thai and other international personnel.

UNMOVIC

On 8 December the Security Council convened in private consultations to hear the fifteenth quarterly report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) for the period October-December 2003. The Acting Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, Demetrius Perricos, briefed the Council on the current activities of UNMOVIC. The Council members took note of the report and reconfirmed their interest in reviewing the current mandate of UNMOVIC and in being kept informed of its activities.

Resolution 1511 (2003)

On 16 December the Security Council met in an open meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of resolution 1511 (2003) of 16 October 2003, in which the Council had requested the Secretary-General to report to it on his responsibilities under the resolution. Council members heard a briefing by the Secretary-General, who presented the report (S/2003/1149) and expressed his views with regard to the current situation in Iraq and the United Nations role and engagement in the country. In his statement the Secretary-General told the Council that the United Nations was ready to play its "full part" in helping Iraqis resume control of their destiny and build a better future. At the same time the United Nations was mindful that, owing to persistent security concerns, few international United Nations staff could operate inside the country for the time being. The Organization's mission would therefore be built up in Cyprus and Jordan. The Secretary-General also referred to the need (as indicated in the report) for much greater clarity on what was expected of the United Nations by Iraqis and by the Coalition in terms of assistance to the political transition (see S/PV.4883).

At the same meeting the Council was addressed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Hoshyar Zebari, who was invited to take part in the meeting in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. In his statement Mr. Zebari outlined the steps taken by the Iraqi Governing Council and the Coalition Provisional Authority in compliance with paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1511 (2003), by which the Governing Council had been invited to set out a timetable for the drafting of a new constitution and the holding of elections. He stressed that the current situation underlined the need for a deepened United Nations involvement in Iraq. He also called on Members of the United Nations to look beyond their differences and come together to forge an international consensus on Iraq. The United Nations had a responsibility to increase cooperation and overcome its differences to help Iraqis in the fight against terrorism (see S/PV.4883).

After the briefings the Security Council convened in a private meeting during which the members had a constructive exchange of views with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq.

Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and Kuwaiti property

In informal consultations on 18 December, the Security Council received a briefing from Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, the Secretary-General's High-level Coordinator, who presented the fourteenth report of the Secretary-General in accordance with paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 1284 (1999).

The Council members agreed on a presidential statement in which they expressed their full support for Ambassador Vorontsov and his tireless efforts on the issues of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of all Kuwaiti property, and agreed that his mandate should continue in accordance with resolution 1284 (1999).

The Council members strongly condemned the killing of the Kuwaiti and third-country nationals in violation of international law and expressed the strong hope that those responsible would be brought to justice.

The Council members expressed their deepest condolences to all the families of the Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, also expressing continued concern for the plight of the families of those persons whose whereabouts were still unknown.

Stressing the importance of the work of the Coalition Provisional Authority, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Tripartite Commission and its Technical Subcommittee, the Security Council called upon all the parties concerned to continue to work towards a satisfactory solution to all the outstanding humanitarian aspects covered by the mandate of the High-level Coordinator.

Middle East

On 12 December the Security Council held the regular monthly open briefing on the situation in the Middle East. In his briefing, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Terje Roed-Larsen, pointed out that recent months had been characterized by relative quiet on the ground, offering a narrow window of opportunity to put the peace process back on track. As factors playing a positive role in this direction he

mentioned the establishment of the new Palestinian Government led by Prime Minister Qurei, who had expressed strong willingness to resume talks with Israeli authorities, and the expressed desire on behalf of Prime Minister Sharon to meet with his counterpart; the efforts by Egypt to achieve a ceasefire; the adoption of resolution 1515 (2003) through which the Council de facto endorsed the road map; civil society initiatives such as the Geneva Accord and the People's Voice Initiative. However the current situation remained fragile. In order to start the process each party had to recognize the core concerns of the other side, which could roughly be defined as territory and terror. Both parties and the international community should address them in parallel, not sequentially or with preconditions.

In informal consultations following the briefing the Council members expressed in principle agreement with the assessment of the situation and urged the parties to continue to seek solution to the situation on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

On 22 December, with the unanimous adoption of resolution 1520 (2003), the Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for a further six months, until 30 June 2004.

In an accompanying presidential statement the President of the Council declared that the Council's view had been reflected in the statement of the Secretary-General contained in his latest report on UNDOF (S/2003/1148) in which he stated that "... the situation in the Middle East is very tense and is likely to remain so unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached".

Europe

Cyprus

On 18 December, after preliminary consultations on a proposed text, the President of the Security Council made a statement to the press on behalf of the members of the Council on the issue of Cyprus.

The members of the Council welcomed the fact that the majority of Turkish Cypriots had expressed their desire for a solution to the Cyprus problem and for accession to the European Union.

The Council members expressed the hope that all parties in northern Cyprus and all other concerned parties would honour the desire of the majority of Turkish Cypriots as soon as possible.

The members of the Council expressed their continuing belief that securing a comprehensive settlement negotiated on the basis of the detailed proposals of the Secretary-General and accession to the European Union by a reunited Cyprus would be in the interest of all Cypriots.

The Council members reiterated their full support for the good offices of the Secretary-General as entrusted to him in Security Council resolution 1250 (1999). They urged the Turkish Cypriot leadership and all parties concerned to strongly support the Secretary-General's efforts and, in this context, called for an immediate resumption of the talks on the basis of his proposals.

The Council members reaffirmed the Council's previous resolutions and statements on Cyprus, including resolutions 541 (1983), 550 (1984) and 1475 (2003).

Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro

On 12 December, in a presidential statement, as agreed in preliminary consultations, the members of the Security Council expressed their support for the "Standards for Kosovo" document, presented on 10 December in Pristina. The "standards before status" policy, designed for Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro), was endorsed by the Council in application of its resolution 1244 (1999). The eight standards under the policy were: functioning democratic institutions; rule of law; freedom of movement; returns and reintegration; economy; property rights; dialogue with Belgrade; and the Kosovo Protection Corps.

In the statement read out by the President (S/PRST/2003/26), the Council members welcomed the launching of a review mechanism, which would give new momentum to the implementation of the "standards before status" policy. They supported the prospect of a comprehensive review of progress made by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in meeting the standards, and noted that, depending on progress made as assessed during the periodical review, a first opportunity for such a comprehensive review should occur around mid-2005.

The Council urged the Provisional Institutions to participate fully and constructively in the working groups within the framework of the direct dialogue with Belgrade on practical issues of mutual interest and to demonstrate their commitment to the process.

The Council also reaffirmed its full support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Harri Holkeri, and called on the Provisional Institutions and all concerned to cooperate fully with him.

On 17 December the Council held an open meeting on the situation in Kosovo, presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, Solomon Passy. The Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Noting the launching of a process of periodic and comprehensive reviews of implementation of the "standards before status" policy, he pointed out that the initiative had been designed to give new momentum to the process and expressed the hope that it would structure and refocus the work of the Provisional Institutions on meeting the benchmarks contained in the eight standards. Achievement of the eight standards was a prerequisite for any discussion of future status. Meeting them would lead to a qualitative change in Kosovo, which was a goal in itself and an essential precondition for a democratic and multi-ethnic society.

In their statements after the briefing delegations supported the initiative and defined it as an important step forward in the implementation of the "standards before status" policy. Some delegations, however, expressed concern that certain provisions of the Kosovo document appeared controversial and unacceptable for all sides.

Other issues

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 9 December the Security Council held an open debate on protection of civilians in armed conflict. Introducing the theme the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, said that the recent deliberate attacks against humanitarian personnel dramatically reduced access to civilians in armed conflict and the humanitarian space required to render support. Access and protection were therefore a priority task for the international community. Security of humanitarian workers; the special protection needs of children in armed conflict; disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement; sexual violence in armed conflict; justice and reconciliation; and special protection and assistance needs of the displaced were identified as other challenges deserving a priority attention.

The Under-Secretary-General also presented an updated version of the aide-memoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the original of which had been adopted by the Council in March 2002, as well as the road map which Council members had called for as a tool to clarify responsibilities, enhance cooperation, facilitate implementation and further strengthen coordination within the United Nations system.

He also outlined 10 action points that built on the areas in the road map that enjoyed consensus support of the Council. The action plan included, apart from the above-mentioned challenges, the need to address the impact of small arms and light weapons on the protection of civilians, and to develop further measures to promote the responsibility of armed groups and non-State actors to protect civilians and to respect international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.

The majority of the speakers who participated in the meeting echoed the views of the Under-Secretary-General and welcomed the updated aide-memoire.

In a presidential statement adopted by the Council on 15 December the members reaffirmed their concern at the suffering inflicted upon, and hardships borne by, civilians during armed conflict. They reaffirmed the need for parties to armed conflict to take all possible measures to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel in accordance with applicable international law.

The Council also adopted, as an annex to the presidential statement, the updated aide-memoire and reiterated its importance as a practical tool that provided a basis for improved analysis and diagnosis of key protection issues during deliberations on peacekeeping mandates.

Working group on general issues relating to sanctions

In consultations held on 18 December the Security Council was briefed by the Chairman of the informal working group of the Security Council on general issues relating to sanctions.

The Council members agreed on a text for a statement to the press in which they noted that the working group had considered at both formal and informal meetings a draft outcome document concerning the Council's use of sanctions as a

policy instrument. The working group had reached consensus on many issues concerning sanctions design, administration and implementation. The members of the group had been familiarized with the results of the Interlaken, Bonn-Berlin and Stockholm processes and found the ideas and recommendations generated to be very useful and a contribution to the fine-tuning and the effective implementation of sanctions. However there remained divergent views on the recommended duration and termination of sanctions. The members of the working group agreed to continue to work towards achieving consensus on these issues.

Reports by Chairmen of Security Council sanctions committees and working groups

As previously agreed by Council members, at an open meeting held on 22 December the Council heard short briefings by the Chairman of the Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, Ambassador Gunter Pleuger of Germany; the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, Ambassador Stefan Tafrov of Bulgaria; the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 918 (1994) concerning Rwanda, Ambassador Faysal Mekdad of the Syrian Arab Republic; Minister Maria Angelica Arce de Jeannet, on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) concerning Sierra Leone; and the Chairman of the informal working group on general issues relating to sanctions, Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon.

The Chairmen briefly reviewed the activities of the respective bodies and shared their experience.